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ABSTRACT

The Alaska Early Childhood Certification (AECCP) process and a summary of a national survey of early childhood certification processes are provided in this report. The AECCP consists of four stages, three of which are directed toward paraprofessionals. The initial phase of certification may be obtained when early childhood training is begun. The second phase of certification requires the trainee to either earn a nationally awarded Child Development Associate certificate or complete a 1-year equivalent intensive training program in early childhood education. Work completed at the second level is applicable to the third phase of training and certification: the associate degree level. The associate degree adds general education knowledge in areas such as English, history, math, and science to the teaching expertise gained in the preceding level of training. The fourth and final step in the certification process is the bachelor's degree, which qualifies the recipient for full professional-level teacher certification. Courses associated with each level of certification are listed. Responses to the national survey obtained from 30 states were used in developing Alaska's early childhood teacher certification plan. (RH)

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Alaska Early Childhood Teacher Certification

by Marjorie Fields

Alaska, like many other states, has a well-developed early childhood teacher training program for preschool, Head Start and day care teachers offered through the state University and community college system. Like most such programs, it has been carefully formulated to conform to national standards. Also like many other states, however until recently Alaska had no training requirements or certification procedures for persons working with children under the age of public school entrance.

This situation allowed untrained or inappropriately trained persons to work with youngsters in their critical formative years. Those programs which acknowledged the significance of early education and care experiences and therefore advertised for a "certified" teacher had only elementary school teachers to choose from. There was no such thing as a certified early childhood teacher in the state.

Recently, this situation has been questioned by many parents seeking quality care and education for their young children and by many teachers with either formal or informal knowledge of the unique needs of young children. Parents wanted persons with special knowledge of child development to work with their youngsters. Teachers without specialized training became aware that it was available, and formally trained early childhood educators expressed a desire to have their training acknowledged in the teacher certification process. Many no longer believed that anyone who had once been a child or had a child knew enough to teach young children; nor were they willing to accept that elementary training was adequate for a preschool teacher. Teachers who had been trained to work with older children sought specialized early childhood education courses to prepare them for their kindergaraten and first grade classes, as well as for preschool teaching.

Concern about the situation among early childhood teacher educators in the state of Alaska culminated in a successful proposal to the state Board of Education to implement a teacher certification program which reflected the "career ladder" approach to training offered through the state University system. This career ladder allows persons working with young children to obtain inservice training and to pursue further education in segments. Each segment of the training program will now be acknowledged by the state certification process as well as by the University system.

There are four stages in the Alaska Early Childhood Certification process, three of which certify paraprofessiionals. (See Figure 1.) A unique feature is that the initial phase of certification, or bottom rung of the career ladder, may be obtained when training is first begun. An Early Childhood Trainee Certificate will be granted to persons upon involvement in early childhood training. To achieve the next phase, the person must earn either a nationally awarded CDA (Child Development Associate) or complete a one-year equivalent intensive training program in early childhood education. This training plus experience is required for certification as an Early Childhood Specialist I. The work completed thus far is then applicable to the next phase of training and certification: the Associate degree level.

The Associate degree adds general education knowledge in areas such as English, history, math and science to the teaching expertise gained in the preceeding level of training. This rounds out the teacher's preparation in terms of content areas, and meets the training requirements for the Early Childhood Specialist II certificate. This is the third and last paraprofessional level rung on the career ladder.

The fourth and final step is the bachelor's degree which qualifies the recipient for full professional level teacher certification. On the University of Alaska Juneau campus the work accomplished in obtaining the Associate degree all applies to the B.A. degree in education. The student who wishes to concentrate on early childhood education in upper division education courses, may emphasize that level in all practicum and optional reading assignments and student teach in a kindergarten or primary classroom. In addition, the student would select the early childhood area of specialization and take courses in techniques of introducing academics to young children and classroom management for preliterate children.

Many teachers in kindergarten and primary classrooms already have a full four year degree in elementary education, however, and cannot realistically be expected to begin again. As these persons become aware that teaching younger children requires special knowledge and expertise, they seek out additional courses to assist them in meeting the needs of their young students. This additional training will be recognized in the Alaska teacher certification system through a special Early Childhood Endorsement added to an Elementary teaching certificate. Six credits, the equivalent of the requirements for recertification every five years, has been accepted as sufficient for this Early Childhood Endorsement in Alaska. However, early childhood teacher educators in the state have pointed out that this endorsement is in no way the equivalent of the more comprehensive early childhood teacher preparation program.

As school districts become aware of the new early childhood certificates, they are requesting further information to assist them in making the difficult personnel decisions with which they are faced.

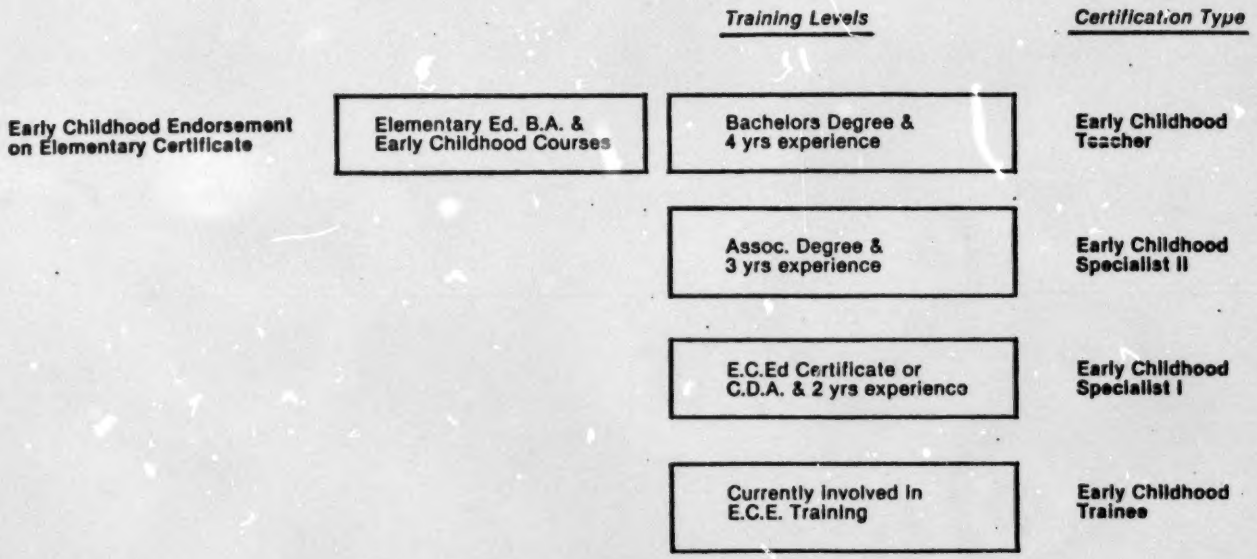
ALASKA

EARLY CHILDHOOD

CAREER LADDER CERTIFICATION PLAN

Enclosed are details regarding the training component of the certification proposal for Alaska early childhood educators. Since this system is already in place on several of the State University campuses, it is possible to describe it in detail. There are many students currently involved in training in one or the other of the two training tracks: field-based or campus-based. Most of these are already working with youngsters and receiving on-the-job type training. There are also many students who have completed one of the training programs, but whose training and expertise are not recognized by a certification process.

It is important that the voluntary nature of this certification be emphasized at this point. Those working with young children will be required to acquire early childhood certification only if they wish to advertise that they are certified teachers of young children. School districts may or may not require specific early childhood education endorsement of their Kindergarten and primary grade teachers. However, the availability of specific early childhood certification will encourage persons who wish to work with that age child to pursue appropriate training. Given the unique nature of the learner before the age of 8 years, realization is fast growing that specific early childhood training is essential to effective teaching. This certification process will not only enhance the quality of education and care for Alaska's young children, but will also include Alaska in the growing number of states which require special early childhood certification.


Training Levels
Certification Type
Early Childhood Endorsement on Elementary Certificate
Elementary Ed. B.A. & Early Childhood Courses
Bachelors Degree & 4 yrs experience
Early Childhood Teacher
Assoc. Degree & 3 yrs experience
Early Childhood Specialist II
E.C.Ed Certificate or C.D.A. & 2 yrs experience
Early Childhood Specialist I
Currently involved in E.C.E. Training
Early Childhood Trainee

CURRENT REALISTIC USE OF LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION:

At this time, due to lack of trained personnel, it is not possible to link levels of training with levels of responsibility. It will take time before all head teachers in early childhood programs will have had specific training in the field. Therefore, it is proposed that for the time being levels of certification reflect verified levels of competence rather than type of responsibility.

Until such time as assigned responsibility can be based on certification level, certification types can be used as guidance in assigning responsibility. The voluntary nature of the certification process is consistent with this approach.

Certification types will also provide consumer decision-making guides to parents selecting teachers and programs for their children. This will also encourage persons to seek training and further enhance the quality of services available to young children.

CAREER LADDER COMPONENTS

Step 1: Involved in Training - currently working on 1 or more credits

This step on the proposed career ladder is designed as an incentive for the person working with young children to begin a training program. Rather than withholding rewards until completion of a possibly intimidating course of study, temporary certification will be immediately available. This rung on the ladder not only is designed to get people started on the career ladder, but also is planned to give some skills to those persons only temporarily employed with youngsters.

Any of the early childhood courses offered through the University of Alaska system will apply toward this level, as well as the field-based early childhood education courses offered by agencies which have agreements with the University programs. Although different University of Alaska campuses may have varying numbers of titles on the courses involved, the content is standard. A reciprocity manual currently being developed by the University of Alaska Early Childhood Task Force will specify how these courses relate to their counterparts on other campuses. The courses listed below use the identifying system of the University of Alaska, Juneau campus.

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ED 105 Introduction to Early Childhood Education
3 credits
Introduction to various approaches to Early Childhood Education; analysis of philosophies of education and child development inherent in various approaches; evaluation of personal values, attitudes, and traits pertinent to teaching role.

ED 119 Child Nutrition and Health
1 credit
Basic nutrition information, plus topics of special interest to educators, such as how diet affects behavior and ability to learn. Emphasis on how to teach nutrition facts to children and motivate the practice of good nutrition. Special tips will be offered on teaching through classroom cooking experiences.

ED 156 Language and Literature Activities for Young Children
1 credit
Selection, development and use of literature and language arts materials for activities for young children.

ED 157 Arts and Crafts Activities for Young Children
1 credit
Selection, development and use of a variety of art and craft materials, equipment and activities for young children. Understanding of relationship of art experiences to child development generally and creativity in particular. Course includes lecture and practical application of information.

ED 158 Science and Math Activities for Young Children
1 credit
Selection, development and use of science, and mathematics materials for activities and the use of games and play as learning materials and activity for young children.

ED 159 Music and Movement Activities for Young Children
1 credit
Selection, development and use of a variety of music and rhythm materials, equipment and activities for young children. Demonstration of appropriate methods of presentation.

ED 172 Introduction to Pre-school
1 credit
Selected topics in early childhood education. Information pertinent to planning for and working with young children in a pre-school setting.

ED 210 Positive Approaches to Discipline
1 credit
Approaches for parents and teachers to use in motivating children toward responsibility and independence.

ED 250 Practicum in Early Childhood Development
3 credits

ED 251 Practicum in Early Childhood Development
3 credits
Supervised participation in a program designed for young children. Seminar attendance required. Prerequisites: ED 105 (or concurrent enrollment)

ED 270 Children with Special Needs
3 credits
Guidance and needs of children who are neurologically handicapped, blind, deaf, crippled, emotionally handicapped, mentally retarded and mentally gifted.

PSY 244 Early Childhood Development
3 credits
Introduction to the physical, social, affective and cognitive development of young children from birth to six years of age. Prerequisites: PSY 101.

Courses listed on this page use the identifying system of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program field-based courses in Early Childhood Education. These are the courses required for the Child Development Associate award (CDA.)

Early Childhood 111 - A Safe Learning Environment

This course stresses the importance of a safe learning environment and includes the competencies which enable students to provide a safe environment for young children. Emphasis is placed on the measures necessary to reduce and prevent accidents. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 112 - A Healthy Learning Environment

This course prepares the student to provide a learning environment for young children which is free of factors which may contribute to or cause illness. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 113 - Learning Environment

This course emphasizes the arrangement of an environment which is conducive to learning and appropriate to the developmental level and learning style of the children. It includes selection of materials and equipment, room arrangement, and scheduling. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 121 - Physical Activities for Young Children

This course stresses the essentials of planning a center which provides space, materials, equipment, and activities which promote the physical development of children. It includes scheduling, planning activities, and selection of equipment and materials. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 122 - Cognitive Activities for Young Children

This course stresses activities and experiences which encourage questioning, probing, and problem-solving skills which are appropriate for different developmental levels and various learning styles of young children. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child developmental center.

Early Childhood 123 - Language Activities for the Young Child

This course stresses activities that will help children acquire and use language as a means of communicating their thoughts and feelings. It also includes non-verbal communication and understanding others. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 124 - Creative Activities for Young Children

This course stresses activities which provide a variety of experiences and media that stimulate children to explore and express their creative ability.

Early Childhood 131 - Group Management With Young Children

This course emphasizes both indirect and direct guidance techniques. Theories of guidance, including body language effects, reinforcement, and logical consequences are discussed for cultural relevance and practical application. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 132 - Social Development for the Young Child

This course stresses the development of social skills which enables children to function as productive members of a group. Emphasis is placed on the development of mutual respect and cooperative work/play between child/child and child/adult. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 211 - Developing Positive Self-Concepts in Young Children

This course stresses helping each child develop a sense of awareness and self-esteem. Emphasis is placed on providing success-oriented activities, encouraging acceptance and expression of children's feelings and developing pride as an individual and as a member of a cultural/ethnic group. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 212 - Developing Individual Strengths in Children

This course stresses the use of activities, techniques and planning that will help each child function to his maximum potential. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 221 - Developing Positive Home - Center Relationships

This course stresses the importance of a positive and productive relationship between families and child development centers. Emphasis is on using this relationship to coordinate the child-rearing efforts of both the family and the classroom. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 222 - Staff Relations and Associated Responsibilities

This course stresses the importance of coordination and communication among staff in the classroom. Emphasis is placed on effective group planning, using resources, improving communication, sharing information about children, maintaining records, establishing and following policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 223 - Exploring and Developing Your Own Personal Capacities in Teaching

This course stresses awareness of one's own personal qualities, feelings and values that affect the teaching atmosphere, one's relationships with children, one's own teaching style. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 231 - Screening

This course stresses activities which will help the teacher to understand the purpose of screening young children and to know how to use good screening procedures. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 232 - Assessment/Recording

This course stresses activities that will help the teacher to understand assessment of young children, recording of assessment information, and staffing procedures. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

Early Childhood 233 - Mainstreaming Preschool Children With Special Needs

This course stresses activities that will help the teacher to understand the concept and purpose of mainstreaming special needs preschool children into the regular classroom. Emphasis is on the rights of the special needs child to service and the necessary procedures for providing that service under P.L. 94-142. Must be taken concurrently with supervised experience in a child development center.

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Step II: Early Childhood Certificate or CDA Award

The Child Development Associate Award (CDA) is a competency-based credential awarded nationally, which signifies to professionals in the field that the holder is competent to work with young children in a group setting. Colleges do not award the CDA; it comes from a national credentialing office, contracted by the Department of Health and Human Services. Although it is possible to earn a CDA without a college credit, students are encouraged to work toward college credit concurrently. Competencies required for the CDA can be gained through courses available in the University of Alaska college system on several campuses.

Although students earn fewer credits in a CDA program than in a certificate program, the experiential component of the CDA is considered of sufficient value to place it on par with the college-based early childhood certificate.

The college-awarded Early Childhood Certificate requires 30 credits in early childhood and related courses. These courses provide the major specialty for, the next step on the career ladder, the Associate Degree. Certificate requirements at the Juneau campus are as follows:

Early Childhood Education Certificate		Credits
Ed 105	Introduction to Early Childhood Education	3
Ed 119	Child Nutrition and Health	1
Ed 156	Language and Literature Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 157	Arts and Crafts Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 158	Science and Math Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 159	Music and Movement Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 210	Postive Approaches to Discipline	3
Psy 244	Early Childhood Development	3
or		or
Psy 245	Child Development	3
BS 220	Culture and Learning	3
Soc 242	The Family	3
Ed 250	Practicum in Early Childhood Education I	3
Ed 251	Practicum in Early Childhood Education II	3
Ed 270	Children with Special Needs	3

The following chart shows how traditional campus-based courses can be correlated with field-based CDA training components. Listed below are Juneau campus Early Childhood courses and the CDA correlates.

Campus-based courses	CDA Field-based courses
Ed 105 Introduction to Early Childhood Education	
A. Approaches	
B. Philosophies	
C. Teaching role	Personal Capacities
Ed 119 Child Nutrition and Health	Healthy
Ed 156 Language and Literature Activities for Young Children	Language
Ed 157 Arts and Crafts Activities for Young Children	Creative
Ed 158 Science and Math Activities for Young Children	Cognitive
Ed 159 Music and Movement Activities for Young Children	Physical
Ed 210 Positive Approaches to Discipline	Group Management
Soc 242 The Family	
A. Contemporary Dynamics	
B. Interpersonal Relations	Staff Relations
C. Practical Application	Home Center
Ed 250 Practicum in Early Childhood Education I	
A. Effective Learning Environment	Learning Environment
B. Safe Learning Environment	Safe
C. Self-Evaluation or Assessment	CDA Assessment
Ed 251 Practicum in Early Childhood Education II	
A. Self-Concept	Self-Concept
B. Expression of Feelings	Individual Strength
C. Social Skills	Social
Ed 270 Children With Special Needs	
A. Screening Techniques	Screening
B. Assessment and Recording	Assessment
C. Individual Learning Plan	Mainstreaming
Psy 244 Early Childhood Development	
A. Infants	
B. Toddlers	
C. Preschoolers	
BS 220 Culture and Learning	
A. Culture and Personality	
B. Minority Groups	
C. Practical Application	

Step III: Associate degree in Early Childhood Education

The associate degree includes general education requirements in areas such as English, history, math and science. It rounds out the student's background in terms of content areas. This two-year degree is the first half of the bachelor degree in education, which allows the student to teach in a public school.

The following example of degree requirements is from the Juneau campus.

Associate of Applied Science General Degree Requirements		Credits
Written Communications (English 111,211,or 212		6
Oral Communications		3
Six credits for any one of the following areas: Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Science, Mathematics		6
Major Specialty (see program requirements)		min. 30
Free Electives to total		60
Complete the following Professional Education Requirements:		
Ed 101	Parenthood	1
Ed 105	Introduction to Early Childhood Education	3
Ed 119	Child Nutrition and Health	1
Ed 156	Language and Literature Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 157	Arts and Crafts Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 158	Science and Math Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 159	Music and Movement Activities for Young Children	1
Ed 210	Positive Approaches to Discipline	3
Psy 244 or	Early Childhood Development	3 or
Psy 245	Child Development	3
BS 220	Culture and Learning	3
Soc 242	The Family	3
Ed 250	Practicum in Early Childhood Education I	3
Ed 251	Practicum in Early Childhood Education II	3
Ed 270	Children with Special Needs	3

Step IV: Bachelors degree with early childhood emphasis

This step includes the traditional public school teacher preparation, but adds some specific training in early childhood education for those planning to teach youngsters in Kindergarten, first and second grades. This training may be obtained as recency credits for recertification if not obtained during initial teacher preparation. The University of Alaska, Juneau offers early childhood endorsement courses through a field of specialization in early childhood education which is one of three areas of emphasis for elementary education students to choose from.

ED 361 Early Childhood Learning Activities
(3+0) 3 credits
Special methods for initial instruction in the academic areas of the pre-school, kindergarten and primary grades. Prerequisites: Upper division standing or permission of the instructor.

ED 360 Classroom Management for the Pre-Literate Child
(3+0) 3 credits
Techniques for introducing the child to the classroom setting and materials. Includes the process of developing independent work habits and self control. Prerequisites: Upper division standing or permission of the instructor.

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Bachelor of Education Degree

Degree Requirements — General Education

Requirements		Credits
1. Humanities (Art, English, Language, Linguistics, Music, Philosophy, Speech)		18
a. Required Courses		
Engl 111	Freshman Composition	3
Engl 211	Intermediate Composition with Modes of Literature	3
SpC 241	Public Speaking	3
b. Electives		9
2. Social Sciences (Anthropology, Economics, Geography, History, Home Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology)		21
a. Required Courses		
Hist 101 or 102	Western Civilization I, II	3
Hist 131, 132	History of the U.S. I, II	6
Psy 101	Introduction to Psychology I	3
Psy 245	Child Development	3
Hist 341	History of Alaska	3
b. Electives		3
3. Mathematics		9
a. Required Courses:		
Math 150	Development of Mathematical Concepts	3
Math 250	Modern Mathematical Concepts	3
b. Elective:		
A computer science or math course		3
4. Science		10
a. Required Courses:		
A biological science course		3
A non-biological science course		3
A laboratory science course		4
Total General Education Requirements		**58**

Professional Education

Requirements		Credits
Required Courses:		45
Ed 222	Orientation to the Teaching Profession	4
Ed 313	Educational Psychology	3
Ed 320	Music Art, PE in Elementary School Curriculum	3
Ed 321	Social Studies Curriculum in Elementary School	3
Ed 322	Introduction to Reading Instruction	3
Ed 323	Science Curriculum in Elementary School	3
Ed 324	Curricular Use of Instructional Media	3
Ed 327	Teaching Exceptional Children in Regular Classrooms	3
Ed 328	Children's Literature in the Elementary School Curriculum	3
Ed 332	Educational Tests and Measurements	3
Ed 452	Student Teaching	9
Ed 453	Language Arts and Reading in the Elementary School Curriculum	3
Ed 454	Mathematics in the Elementary School Curriculum	3

Area of Concentration (select one of the areas below)		Credits
a. Early Childhood Education		6
Ed 360	Classroom Management for the Pre-Literate Child	3
Ed 361	Early Childhood Learning Activities	3
b. Special Education		6
Ed 324	The Exceptional Child	3
Ed 485	Learning: Theory of Learning Disabilities	3
c. Elementary Education		6
Ed 427	Mental Hygiene in the Elementary School	3
Ed 479	The Culturally Different Elementary Child	3

Study by Dr. Marjorie Fields
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Early Childhood Teacher Certification in Other States

Alaska's early childhood teacher certification plan was developed following a survey of early childhood certification procedures for the rest of the nation. This information was sought both as a source of ideas as to types of certification, and also as a source of support for implementation of an early childhood certification program for Alaska.

Responses were obtained from 30 states as a result of a single mailing in May 1981. These responses showed that 21 states have some type of special certification for teachers working with very young children, although 2 of these apply only to those working with children with special needs. Five states indicated they they still assume that general K-8 elementary education training is sufficient for all of those grades. Four states indicated that they were working on regulations which would provide for more specialized certification requirements for early childhood teachers. The Oregon Association for Education of Young Children had completed and submitted a proposal for early childhood endorsement on the Oregon elementary credential.

In most cases, endorsement for Kindergarten and primary grades required training in early childhood in addition to elementary education training, rather than requiring a B.A. degree in early childhood education. This may be due to the scarcity of 4-year teacher training programs specifically in early childhood education. Alaska's proposal attempts to make a distinction between the two types of preparation.

Only three states,(California, Minnesota and New Jersey) showed a system of certifying paraprofessionals, although the Washington State Association for Educators of Personnel in Early Childhood programs has proposed a certification program which has two paraprofessional levels. California also has two paraprofessonal levels on their Children's Center Instructional Permits. Minnesota grants a prekindergarten provisional licence on the basis of a 2 year training program, and New Jersey recognizes an Associate degree level for child care center staff. Alaska can now be added to these, with three paraprofessional levels.

The federally sponsored Child Development Associate (CDA) apparently has not been seriously utilized in certification requirements. South Dakota acknowledges it for an early childhood endorsement added to an elementary teaching certificate. The Washington state proposal also utilizes the CDA as the lower step of paraprofessional certification. The Alaska plan utilizes the CDA as one approach to the second level of paraprofessional preparation.

PS 013038

State Early Childhood Certification Survey Response

	I. Separate Certification			II. Career Ladder
	Yes	Grade Levels Included	Special Circumstance	Yes
Alaska	(X)	P,K, 1&2		X
Alabama	X	N-3		
Arkansas		K-6	(Includes ECE in Elem. Ed. Curriculum)	
California	X			X
South Carolina	X	K-4		
Colorado	X	N-2, 0-8 yrs		
Connecticut	X	N-3	(Only to those who teach in public progams)	
North Dakota	(?)	K	(Under study: major changes)	
South Dakota	X	N		
Delaware	X	NK (valid 1-3)		
Florida	X	K Endorsement	(6 cr. ECE + BA in Elem. Ed)	
Hawaii				
Kansas	X	0-8 yrs, P		
Massachusetts		P,K, 3-7 yrs.	(Only special needs)	
Minnesota	X	P,K		X
Mississippi	X	K-3		
Missouri		P,K-Gr. 3	(Special Education)	
Nebraska	X	P,K		
New Hamshire	X	NK, K-3		
New Jersey	X	N		X
New Mexico	X	K Endorsement	(B.A. in Elementary Educ. + 24 cr. req.)	
New York				X
Oklahoma	X	Preschool	(working on N-3)	

(continued on next page)

Oregon	(X)	P,K 1st gr.	(NAEYC working on proposal)	
Pennsylvania	X	N-K, K-3	(in Public Schools)	
Texas				
Utah	X	K-4 Endorsement	(BA in Elem. Ed. + ECE Training)	
Washington	(X)		(WAEPECP proposal)	(X)
Wisconsin	X	N-K		
Wyoming				